

Editorial

Not for sale

Never before in U.S. history has a sitting President been forced to defend himself in a court of law. The reason for this is quite obvious: Lesser matters should not be allowed to take precedence over affairs of state. In the instance of Paula Jones's claims of sexual harassment, we can only agree with President Clinton's lawyer, Robert Bennett, when he characterized the \$700,000 lawsuit as "tabloid trash."

On a certain level the whole business is laughable. As even Jones's sister Charlotte has told the press, the rewards for Paula Corbin Jones from this frivolous prosecution are great: She has been catapulted into media stardom. For the United States, however, the situation is serious. This is not merely political harassment of the Clintons, but it is a bald-faced attempt to discredit the institution of the presidency by any and all means.

Bennett's claim that a constitutional question is raised by the suit is not an overstatement. It is already well established by the courts that a President cannot be sued for actions taken while he is President. The question of whether a President can be sued for prior acts has never been decided. When Richard Nixon was sued even after leaving office, the Supreme Court said that he could not be sued, relying heavily on the argument that forcing a President to defend himself in a civil suit would be too draining on his time.

This is what Bennett referred to in his press conference, when he said that "the courts have shown great sensitivity to the importance of the President's role and the importance of the President's time." It reflects a recognition, Bennett continued, "that you can't paralyze a presidency by filing actions against the President. It would seem to me," he went on, "those principles would be all the more important and applicable in this situation where you have such a meritless complaint which has been filed years after it should have been brought, if it were to be brought at all."

It is expected that Bennett will quickly move to have the Jones lawsuit thrown out of court on that basis. Still, the penalties for the Clinton family, simply in terms of the legal bills which they are incurring, are

now estimated to be near \$1 million.

As in the case of the malicious, political persecution of Lyndon LaRouche and his associates, bankrupting one's opponents by forcing them to incur huge legal debts defending themselves against abuse of the courts is a well-known tactic. The misuse of regulatory authority by environmentalists is a parallel instance.

On May 9, the *Wall Street Journal*, the mouthpiece of the eastern banking establishment which has been encouraging the witchhunt, bragged about how the First Family is being caught in an economic vise.

The *Journal* points out that the White House insisted the Clintons would pay for legal costs out of their own pockets. The *Journal* suggests that allowing them to have a large debt to lawyers, or to solicit help by forming a legal defense fund, is impermissible because it could "implicitly involve the selling of political favors."

One must support Mrs. Clinton charges that she and her husband are the victims of a "witchhunt" by "paranoiac conspiracy-driven" right-wingers who are feeding the media with faxes from "secret headquarters devoted to destroying Bill and Hillary Clinton." But she should realize that these people are dupes in a much larger, more vicious conspiracy, being run not from the United States but from the offices of the Hollinger Corp., which owns Britain's *Daily Telegraph* among other media.

In the May 8 *Sunday Telegraph*, reporter Ambrose Evans-Pritchard admitted that not only is he leading the pack against the Clintons through the pages of that newspaper, but that he was personally involved in legal strategy meetings with Mrs. Jones, where the filing of the suit was planned. "By pure chance," says Evans-Pritchard, "I happened to be present at a strategy meeting last month in a boat on the Arkansas River when her attorney, Danny Traylor, was weighing up the pros and cons of legal action."

It is about time that the American people wake up and recognize that it is their country, not the Clinton family, which is really under attack.